14: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

SUDAN NOTES AND RECORDS

VOLUME III.

1920.

THE
SUDAN PRINTING PRESS,
KHARTOUM.

[TITLE PAGE]

14: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

UPPER NILE PROVINCE.

THE SHILLUK PEACE CEREMONY.

628 This district had been disturbed by a feud for more than three years. The people of the district were tired of the continual guerilla warfare, and some of them were anxious to have the trouble finally settled, and to return to normal conditions. Each side was afraid to make the suggestion lest it appear to be weak.

628 634 643 [677] After an outbreak the manur and the king or mek advised the chief men of the district to get together and make peace. The chief of the district came to the mission and asked to have their conference of the chief men here. Since the feud the chief of the district had been able to exercise his authority over one faction only. The Mainam, faction, which included Mainm, Fakoi and Fatwara recognized him, but the people of Failo refused to accept him as chief. However the old men of Failo answered his call, and after several conferences both sides agreed that they desired to end the feud. They decided to inform the government and the king of their decision, and that peace, would be established, when it suited the government to send a representative with the king.

The king came to the mission as being neutral ground where both sides could come. He had two days to work before the arrival of the inspector. He needed only a few hours. The old men of both factions presented themselves before him. He said "You are the chief men. How is the talk?" They replied that it was finished. Akol, the chief of the district, then said it was his desire to rule the district well, but that he needed the help of the king, and the government to unite it. The king then dismissed the old men, and told them the talk was finished. He warned them to bring their fighting men to have the final ceremony as soon as the Inspector arrived.

628 634 [641] The Senior Inspector of the province, Mr. Jackson, arrived in the night. Chief Akol, heard the boat pass his village, and he was so anxious for the peace, that he ran to the mission to make sure it was the province boat. When he had found it was the boat belonging to the Inspector he ran back to call his men. He told the people he was

14: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

having the feud brought to a close, and warned them, that they would do well to support him. He also told them, that should any man seek to renew the feud he would find great trouble. The quiet of the night was broken by the kudu horn calling the men to assemble.

In the morning Akol came to inform the king that the men had arrived. The fighting men stopped at a respectful distance. Akol called the Mainam faction to come near. He was told to call the rest of his country, and he said 'it is my country' and he then called the Failo men, and they came near. The king greeted them, and then Akol proceeded to give them some advice. He informed them that the king had given an ox to be used in the peace conference. He told them that in the future they were to refrain from murder, on the road, in the fields, or wherever they might meet their neighbours. He added, "The person who will commit a murder will ruin his own house. If you have a disagreement bring a case before the king or the government. If busybodies from outside bring reports against your neighbours, do not let it estrange you again."

The young men with their weapons then moved out into an open place where they could find plenty of room for the final ceremonies. The men of each faction were separate, and Mr. Jackson, and the king stood between them. A great crowd of spectators had gathered. Some of them were from other villages, and some were men who from some reason or other could not appear in the performance even though from the interested villages.

Akol threw some dust into the air near the animal. It signified that as chief of the district he held the land, and it was also to ensure that no accident would mar the ceremony.

A time of speech making followed. The visiting chieftains made talks of exhortation in which they emphasized the gravity of a conference sealed with the blood of a victim. The king made a talk in which he pointed out that in colour the animal to be killed had bits of both red and black. The red was for the blood that would be shed should some one break the covenant, and the black was for the evil of such a course. "We, the black people unite with the red (white) people of the government to reconcile you." He told them that Akol was to be chief, and that the other responsible men were to obey him. He informed the people that the animal was a cow of Nyikang, that it was a descendant of a cow owned by Nyikang and

537 628 643 776 that its ancestors had also been owned by Dok, son of Nyikang. (That was added because the people of this district pay great honour to Dok.) The king added most seriously. "The flesh of this animal is as my flesh, and its blood is the same as my blood. Great disaster will come on you if you break the covenant, for you will be cursed by the blood."

537 628 648 The other chief men spoke. The Inspector inquired whether or not they were ready to abide by the promises they were making, and both sides declared they were.

628 643 782 Then the king called Akol saying "take the spear". The king then took the spear to be used from the hand of his follower, who had been carrying it. The spear was held up for the people to view, and they were informed that the person, who dared to break the oath would have the spear enter his body, even as the spear would later enter the body of the sacrifice.

628 782 The next ceremony was to pull the tail of the animal. Akol pulled for the Mainam faction, but one, who would have pulled for the Fallo faction was rejected as being too young. Then one of their oldest men stepped out and pulled its tail. This act they looked upon as an oath, that the men pulling the tail were to bear the blame [781] if the peace should be broken. Disaster would come both to the man who pulled and his family, should his faction break the agreement.

Akol then rubbed the spear on the back of the animal, and then called for some one to give it the first thrust. A number who were called to do it refused because they were too young, and they feared the responsibility, because in case the feud should be renewed the man who shed the blood would be held guilty. Every then a chance was given to the people to refuse. They said, If you do not want peace, do not let the blood be spilled." A man was found to stab the animal. He gave it a serious wound. The animal walked toward [787] Fallo. The people declared that the animal was showing that Fallo was responsible for its death, that is Fallo had been the original transgressor in the trouble. One young man from the Mainam faction said the decision was sure to be against Fallo because the animal had been brought from Malakal with some cattle which were then in Fallo, and the wounded animal was almost sure to turn back toward them. Then men from both factions speared it, and the animal fell.

14: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

After the animal fell the two factions moved closer together. The animal was then cut open, and some of the contents of the stomach was taken by the old men, and thrown on the young men. That was done to show their united condition. The thought was that the animal eats a bit here and there, but in the stomach it all becomes one mass. Even so the inviduals of the two factions were to become one. The two factions then united in singing the song of Dak.

To conclude the ceremony the men of the two factions started to march, and as they marched the two factions mingled until the onlookers could not tell to which faction the people belonged. The old chief was so happy that he leaped about, and danced like a boy.

The Inspector then gave some tobacco to the chief men. After that the meat of the animal was divided, and part taken by each faction.

The meat was to be eaten in the villages, and the tobacco was to be smoked, and the people were to become one also through the eating, and smoking of the same thing. The formal ceremony was finished.

Before the people separated the king called a man, who had been under arrest for several months because he had taken part in the feud. The king said "When you see a man from the other village will you again curse him, and call to your friends to come on to slay him? The man said he would not. The king said "we heard of this man and his big words, but when we took him he was very small." He added that was often true of boastful men.

Both factions now profess to be glad that peace has been made, and declare that they intend to keep the peace.

Rev. H. S. OYLER.